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NEWS RELEASE

SLAVERY REPARATIONS NEEDN'T MEAN CASH — RECTIFY BLACK HEALTH DEFICIT, SAYS VERNELLIA RANDALL

DAYTON, Ohio — For all the progress made since slavery was abolished in the United States, there remains a disparity between the general health of African-American and Caucasian populations, says Vernellia Randall, law professor at the University of Dayton who specializes in health care issues.

"There has never been a point in our history when African-Americans had equal or near-equal health status with whites," she said. "Disproportionally, we die at a higher rate from every disease or condition except suicide. Hypertension, diabetes, cancer, liver disease — you name it."

As April is minority health month, Randall will present "Eliminate the Slave Health Deficit: Reparations and Black Health" at 3 p.m. Wednesday, April 16, in the Mathias H. Heck Courtroom in Keller Hall at the University of Dayton. Admission is free and open to the public.

The U.S. government has emphasized individual responsibility for good health, and Randall also believes people should eat right, exercise and visit a doctor's office when needed. "But you have to have money to eat the right things, you need a safe, nonpolluted environment to exercise and there has to be a doctor in the community you can visit," she said. "Those assumptions don't hold true for poor communities, rural communities and especially minority communities."

The call for reparations for descendants of slaves, a major theme at the United Nations' World Council on Racism in 2001, "would be a good justification for doing this, to prioritize health issues for blacks. It's not that we don't know what has to be done, it's do we have the will to do it?"

One recommendation Randall makes is to widely distribute medical offices throughout the community. "We could actually have health care providers in the communities they serve, either by offering incentives or through zoning provisions so they couldn't cluster in certain

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areas," she said. "That would be better for the health of the entire population."

She also recommends a national law preventing health care discrimination and calls for a living wage provision rather than minimum wage.

Randall's address is sponsored by the Ohio Commission on Minority Health, the Dayton Urban League, UD's Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., Center for Leadership in Community and the University of Dayton School of Law.